



LSA FILM, TELEVISION, AND MEDIA
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Graduate Handbook

Revised 2023

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Purpose and overview

The Ph.D. program in Film, Television, and Media is a highly selective, interdisciplinary program that offers students the opportunity to work with internationally recognized faculty at a world-class institution with incredible resources. In conjunction with LS&A, we offer five years of support to those admitted, emphasize mentoring and collaboration with faculty, provide additional research and travel support to our students, and offer a host of professional development workshops and events. There is also a range of summer research and teaching opportunities available to our graduates. The Department also offers a Certificate in Film, Television, and Media to graduate students enrolled in affiliated doctoral programs at the University of Michigan.

Graduate students in Film, Television, and Media receive broad training in the historical and theoretical foundations of cinema and media studies, while developing expertise in another field or subject area related to their research interests. While designing a highly individualized program of study, students have the opportunity to complete course work on cinema, media studies, television, and digital media through the department. Graduate students are also able to begin developing research projects with faculty members beginning in the very first year of the program.

This handbook is designed to provide an overview of the policies and procedures specific to the Film, Television, and Media graduate and graduate certificate programs. Faculty and students should also be familiar with Rackham Graduate School's policies and procedures as summarized on their website (<http://www.rackham.umich.edu/current-students/policies/academic-policies>)

Admissions

New students are admitted to the doctoral program once each year to begin in the fall term. Application materials for all potential students must be received by the department no later than December 15 of the year prior to admission.

Admission materials must include:

- (a) Completed Rackham application
- (b) Statement of Purpose
- (c) Personal Statement
- (d) Official transcripts of previous study
- (e) Three letters of recommendation
- (f) Two samples of written work
- (g) GRE scores

Since the department values intellectual diversity, students at the graduate level are admitted without specific prerequisites. We look for students with a broad liberal education, who have also demonstrated a record of academic excellence and have articulated a viable, well-formulated course of graduate study compatible with the strengths of the department and its faculty. Nevertheless, some undergraduate training in cinema, media, or television studies is strongly recommended.

The Graduate Program Committee

The Graduate Program Committee typically consists of 3 faculty members selected by the Department Chair of FTVM. The GPC is chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies, who is also selected by the Department Chair. Department faculty serve in this position, which rotates periodically. The faculty members of the Graduate Program Committee are responsible for developing and enforcing policies affecting the graduate students. When changes to the doctoral program are recommended by the committee, they are brought to the Department Chair and Executive Committee for further discussion and voted on by the full graduate faculty. The committee also more generally advises the Chair and department faculty on the regulations governing the doctoral degree. For example, the committee has been responsible for compiling this handbook, and will be primarily responsible for future revisions. Moreover, it discusses and advises on general graduate student concerns, including funding policies and graduate curriculum, whether brought to the committee through the student representatives or other channels. In urgent cases, the Director of Graduate Studies can act on behalf of the committee, after consulting with any members who might easily be available. The committee typically meets at least once a month from September to May.

Graduate Mentoring

No aspect of a student's graduate experience is potentially more important than the mentoring experience. FTVM conceives of graduate training as an intellectual apprenticeship with the student receiving ongoing advice and counseling from a series of faculty members concerning a broad spectrum of intellectual and professional issues. Mentoring is critical to the student's learning process—as it is to the student's timely progress through our graduate program. It is critical that students *and* faculty alike recognize the importance of a successful mentoring experience. While the Graduate Program Committee offers students guidance relative to departmental policy, individualized exams, progress to degree, and professionalization concerns are the purview of the faculty working directly with the students in the capacity of mentors.

All graduate students are assigned a faculty mentor upon entering the Department (aka “first-year mentor”). Because acting as a faculty mentor counts as a service assignment, the DGS and Chair assign advisors based on faculty availability, faculty service load, consultation with incoming graduate students, and compatibility with a student's research interests. To the extent possible, faculty mentors are chosen from the Department's core graduate faculty, to ensure that the mentor is aware of the Department's requirements. It is equally important that budgeted faculty be counseled in their responsibilities as faculty mentors. While some students enter the program with a strong sense of which faculty member will eventually serve as their primary advisor and potential dissertation chair, many understandably take time to decide which faculty mentor would be best suited for their project. The initial assigning of a first-year mentor is thus not necessarily a decision about selecting a dissertation advisor, although this may certainly be the case. The department strongly recommends selecting a potential dissertation advisor by the end of the second year and prior to examinations. Students should feel free to discuss how and when to select an advisor with their faculty mentor and the Director of Graduate Studies.

Mentoring Agreements

In keeping with the guidance of Rackham's Faculty Committee on Mentoring (Mentoring Others Results in Excellence, or [MORE](#)), students and mentors should formulate and implement a mentoring plan, which details shared expectations for both individuals. These plans should make explicit aspects of mentoring such as forms and regularity of communication, short-term and long-term professional goals, disagreement resolution, and other considerations.

The template for developing mentoring plans can be found on the [MORE](#) website, or downloaded directly [here](#).

It is expected that mentoring plans will be implemented between a student and their first-year mentors and all subsequent primary advisors, including the exam committee chair, the prospectus committee chair, and the dissertation committee chair. Students and mentors may want to revisit and revise these agreements at different stages of the student's progress through the PhD program.

Professionalization workshops

Each semester, Film, Television, and Media faculty will offer two professionalization workshops. The topics of these workshops typically include job market strategies, fellowship applications, conferencing strategies, and publishing. Each of these workshops will be conducted by a guest or FTVM faculty member selected by the DGS in consultation with the graduate students. The DGS is also responsible for scheduling these workshops. Ideally, the individual faculty members holding the workshops will rotate every year so that graduate students hear a range of perspectives and that the responsibility of professionalization is distributed equally among graduate faculty.

Course requirements and academic expectations

Required, core courses: 3 credit hours each

FTVM 601: Film, Television, and Media Theory and Method

FTVM 602: Film, Television, and Media Historiography

FTVM 604: Prospectus Writing

Total: 9 credit hours required

Elective Courses

FTVM 603: Seminar in Material Practices

FTVM/AMCULT/COMM/ENGLISH/SI 610: Advanced Digital Studies Seminar

FTVM 620: Seminar in Film or Electronic Digital Media and Culture (rotating topics)

FTVM 621: Seminar in the Theory and Practice of Documentary

FTVM 622: Seminar in Transnational Film or Electronic/Digital Media (rotating topics)

FTVM 631: Advanced Seminar in Theories of Film or Electronic/Digital Media (rotating topics)

FTVM 632: Advanced Seminar in Film or Electronic/Digital Media History(rotating topics)

FTVM/AMCULT/DIGITAL/ENGLISH 658-Special Topics in Digital Studies

Total: 15 credit hours required (at least one course must be taken in each area: film,television, and digital media)

Cognate Courses (taken outside of FTVM):

Total: 9 credit hours required

TOTAL CREDIT HOURS REQUIRED FOR THE DOCTORAL DEGREE= 33

Course requirements (see Appendix A)

Students must complete a total of 33 credit hours of coursework toward the doctoral degree. These credit hours are divided accordingly: 9 hours of core courses, 15 hours of elective courses in FTVM, and 9 hours of cognate courses, taken outside of FTVM. As per Rackham rules, students must complete at least 18 of those credit hours on the Ann Arbor campus. In the first year, students are strongly advised to take 9 hours of courses in each of the two initial terms; among them should be FTVM 601: Film, Television, and Media Theory and Method, and FTVM 602: Film, Television, and Media Historiography. Students are strongly encouraged to complete the required FTVM courses plus cognates within the first two years so that all coursework needed to advance to candidacy is completed within this time frame.

Cognate Courses (taken outside of FTVM) 9 credit hours required

Working with their advisor, students will develop a program of at least 3 additional seminars to take that will form an individualized and integrated study of film, television and/or digital media. At least two of these should supplement or expand an area of interest pertinent to the proposed dissertation topic. These courses can be taken from any of the offerings of the Graduate School. Students may gather information from various sources about potentially useful sets of courses, and ultimately make their selections in consultation with their mentors and/or with the Director of Graduate Studies. Cognate courses chosen in consultation with faculty mentors should include a secondary disciplinary or interdisciplinary competence. Students are encouraged to begin taking these supplemental area courses early in their coursework, both to refine their specialization and to identify potential committee members outside of Film, Television, and Media.

Independent Studies

You can arrange independent studies with individual faculty members. Independent studies are typically undertaken in instances when an appropriate or relevant graduate course is not available through the department or university. In other words, a student should request an independent study only after all other options to access course material or a particular subject area have been exhausted or demonstrated to be unavailable. The faculty generally discourages enrollment in independent studies in favor of enrollment in seminar courses. To sign up for an independent study in FTVM you need to set up a course of study with a faculty member with whom you have devised a program of study

for the semester and register with the course number for "independent research."

FVTM Production Courses

Graduate students may take production and screenwriting courses that are offered as part of the Department's undergraduate curriculum (e.g., FVTM 200-400 level classes). In these cases, the student will officially enroll in a graduate level "Independent Study" (FVTM 500) with a production or screenwriting faculty member, but will participate in the undergraduate course. Production and screenwriting courses will count as electives, and no more than two such courses will count toward a student's degree.

Graduate students must consult with the course instructor to determine if the student is qualified to enroll in this particular class, in light of the student's previous training and coursework. Although the expectation is that the graduate student will be a fully participating member of the class, the graduate student and the instructor should devise a work plan that addresses issues related to group projects and the higher level of work expected in graduate coursework. Because production and screenwriting courses commonly require substantial time commitments outside of the classroom, graduate students planning to enroll in these classes must consult with their mentor/advisor to assess the benefits and potential problems of taking the class.

Continuous enrollment

As of 2010, PhD students need to register for each Fall and Winter semester from matriculation to degree completion, unless they have received an approved Leave of Absence or an approved Extramural Study status. Check Rackham's website for their leave of absence policy. Per Rackham requirements, students who do not register will be presumed to have withdrawn from the program and will be processed as such. Any student who registers late for courses is responsible for payment of all late fees.

Students will register in spring or summer terms only when they elect courses, take preliminary examinations, or defend their dissertations during these semesters. PhD students will have 12-month privileges for University services like library access and health care coverage whether or not they register in the spring/summer semester.

LS&A Ten-term rule

The ten-term rule specifies that no graduate student may receive more than ten terms of College (LS&A) support, including teaching and fellowships. After several years in the program, you should expect to see, even within a single graduate cohort, considerable variety in support patterns. Almost every student arrives at the ten-term College support limit at a different time. This is due to the many variables involved: external fellowships; internal departmental and Rackham fellowships of several kinds, each fellowship with its own rules and stipulations; variations in the number of terms of GSI appointments and in GSI fractions; and idiosyncratic patterns of leaves of absence.

Petitioning for exemption or changes of requirements

Decisions to waive or change course requirements need to be submitted to the GPC for approval. Students requesting these for any reason should start this process by emailing or speaking to the Director of Graduate Studies directly. This email should include an attached document in which the student clearly and thoroughly explains the rationale for such exemptions or changes.

Academic integrity

Rackham documents its policies on academic standards and integrity in its Student Handbook, as well as in a separate document on Academic Integrity. Among rules that need particular emphasis is the one concerning the multiple submission of term papers. Rackham states: "It is improper to submit the work one has done for one class or project to a second class or as a second project without first getting the informed permission of the second instructor. Acceptance of one piece of work that is submitted for two classes must be arranged beforehand."

Professional Behavior

Students are expected to treat fellow members of the university community with respect, courtesy, and integrity. Students are expected to maintain timely and effective communication with faculty, students, and administrators. Further, students are expected to behave in a way that contributes to an inclusive and welcoming climate at the University of Michigan. As a Graduate Student Instructor, one is expected to treat the lead instructor with respect. Good citizenship within FTVM includes participating in Departmental events, such as scholarly talks and professionalization workshops.

International students

International students will need to be aware of the registration requirements of their visa, but their advisors will need to follow Rackham's guidelines to be certain that all requirements are being met. The International Center is a clearinghouse for all information pertaining to international students, including policies regarding travel, taxes, visas, and employment.

More information is available here: <http://www.rackham.umich.edu/current-students/policies/academic-policies/section3> - 31.

Leaves of Absence

Ph.D. students may request a temporary leave of absence when certain life events prevent continued active participation in their degree program, enabling students to officially suspend work toward their degree for a limited time. The Leave of Absence Policy, a checklist for Ph.D. students, and a checklist for faculty and staff are available on Rackham's website. They provide guidance and information about how the process supports academic planning and protects students' privacy:

<http://www.rackham.umich.edu/policies/registration/leave-of-absence>

Students may request a leave of absence up to six months prior to the term the leave is to start. A leave of absence enables a student not to register during a fall or winter term (students only register in the spring/summer term if they are taking their prelims or defending) and remain in compliance with the continuous enrollment requirement. A leave will be granted to students for illness or injury, to provide care or assistance for family and dependents, to meet military service obligations, or for other personal reasons.

A student on a Rackham-approved leave of absence suspends progress toward the PhD degree for a minimum of one fall or winter term. No tuition and fees are charged for the period during which a student is on a leave of absence. However, leave of absence may have implications for a student's federal financial aid, loans, and visa status, if applicable. Students are expected to verify their situation with the Office of Financial Aid for further information. Students on leave have access to limited services that allow them to remain current in their field of study and connected to their program, but do not have the benefits

of registered status. Students on leave may not use University facilities or services normally available to registered students and are not allowed to work toward their degree during this absence.

Before applying for leave, students are required to discuss it with the Chair of FTVM, the Director of Graduate Studies, and their faculty advisor to develop a strategy for completing the degree program, as well as to discuss alternatives to a leave. The student must also work with the DGS and dissertation chair on a viable “re-entry” plan that is submitted and approved in advance of the leave. Note that U.S. immigration regulations may restrict the eligibility of an international student for a leave of absence. International students considering a leave of absence must consult with the International Center as a first step toward discussions regarding a leave of absence.

Terminal MA Degrees

Although Film, Television, and Media does not admit students into an MA program, students who leave the doctoral program after two or more years (by their choice or at our request) often seek an MA in order to have a degree to show for their efforts.

Consequently, at the Department level there are no fixed MA requirements, beyond the six required pre-candidacy seminars. Exceptions to this need Graduate Program Committee approval. Do note that Rackham Graduate School requires MA students to satisfactorily complete a minimum of 18 total credits and requires a minimum overall GPA of 3.0 (B average) to grant an MA.

Readmission to the Graduate Program

From time to time individuals who were admitted to the PhD Program withdraw before completion of the degree. Provided that the student left the Department in good standing, they may apply for readmission. The process includes: an Application for Readmission/Change of Program form (available from the Rackham Graduate School); a letter addressed to the Director of Graduate Studies briefly outlining the reasons why the student chose to leave the program earlier and why they now wish to return; a detailed plan and timetable for completion of the degree; and a brief description of funding resources or needs. A student seeking readmission must make contact with current Film, Television, and Media budgeted faculty and faculty associates—including faculty with whom they expect to work—in order to ensure that there are faculty available to provide effective mentoring. At least one letter of support from a current FTVM faculty member is required. The graduate faculty is in charge of decisions regarding readmission cases.

Conflict resolution

Any conflicts relating to a graduate student that cannot be adequately handled or addressed by the department may be referred to Rackham’s Conflict Resolution Officer. The Resolution Officer handles a wide variety of student issues, and they are the first resource for review of a situation. They will review any preliminary inquiries and determine if and how they should proceed. Based on the nature of the issue, the Resolution Officer may meet with the student, or provide in writing a summary of the dispute. If the issue is serious enough (generally harassment or misconduct related), it could be referred to the Rackham Hearing Board for review. The student could then face a variety of consequences, suspension, expulsion, educational service project, corrective action, disciplinary probation, etc. This would be determined in consultation with the department, and of course depends on the severity of the situation or allegations.

Timeline to degree

Overview

As funded by Rackham School of Graduate Studies and LSA, our doctoral program is designed as a 5-year course of study that may be extended if a student acquires a fellowship or another form of funding. Following the Prospectus Defense, students may be allowed to take more time beyond the fifth year to complete the dissertation, especially when the nature of their project requires extensive research, mastering a new language, travel to archives, etc. Many of our students seek external funding for their doctoral projects if they take more than five years to graduate.

A brief overview of the FTVM graduate curriculum and progress to degree is as follows (please, see also the table below). Required coursework is concentrated in the student's first two years, but additional courses can be taken beyond the second year on a limited basis. Students are generally required to take two core courses in their first year: FTVM 601 and FTVM 602. In the fall semester of their second year, students will complete a progress review of their coursework and take part in a second-year review. Students take Qualifying Exams in the fall semester of their third year, after which they will successfully advance to candidacy and obtain the A.B.D. status. They will then proceed to write and defend their Dissertation Prospectus in the winter semester of their third year in the program. Students are expected to complete a Prospectus Defense with their entire dissertation committee in the second semester of their third year in the Department.

Finally, each student must pass a Dissertation Defense of the completed manuscript that is deposited with Rackham.

First year

Your first year will be centered on coursework and will be free of teaching; you should use the opportunity to broaden the base of your knowledge and explore new fields and ideas, through courses offered both in FTVM and throughout the university. Your first year of studies, in which students typically take three courses a semester, enables students to explore emerging interests and do advanced work in already identified fields of specialization. This is also the time to address deficits in your undergraduate education.

Choose a variety of courses, periods, media, and approaches. If you do not already have a good background in particular areas of theory or history, now is the time to develop it. In subsequent years, your studies will become increasingly focused as you define your fields of specialization, select an examination committee, and begin reading for your exam. In the first year, you should develop the breadth and variety that will later allow you to make a sound decision about your selected field. The range as well as the quality of your work will come under review in your third-term review. Students are expected to take required courses as soon as they are offered, rather than postponing them for a subsequent academic year.

First-year review

In the first half of October of the second year, you will meet with the DGS and your assigned mentor (or designated primary advisor) for a progress review. Students are responsible for scheduling this meeting, which includes coordinating with the Student

Services Coordinator on room assignment. In advance of this meeting, you need to provide a self-evaluation statement to the DGS that summarizes progress during the previous year, goals for moving forward, challenges you have faced, and areas for improvement. The self-evaluation should address topics like coursework and professionalization. You also need to provide a current CV as well as a writing sample from the previous year. If the DGS happens to be the student's primary advisor, it is recommended to invite another potential member of their committee, or a faculty member with whom they have taken a course.

Second year

Coursework becomes somewhat lighter in the second year of the program as other components—teaching and exam preparation in particular—are added. Your second year ought to reflect your engagement with and development of your field(s) of specialization with an eye towards your dissertation. Your third-term review committee may also suggest or require courses in particular areas. Use these seminars as a means to do significant work in areas of special interest to you; dissertations and scholarly publications frequently begin as seminar essays.

Second-year review

The procedures for this review are the same as for the first-year progress review and it is scheduled in October of the student's third year. The DGS will contact each student to notify them of relevant deadlines and a timeline leading up to the review. Students are then responsible for scheduling this meeting, which includes coordinating with the Student Services Coordinator on room assignment. The student provides the DGS with a self-evaluation statement, a current CV, and a writing sample from the previous year. The self-evaluation should address topics like coursework, professionalization, and teaching, as applicable. In addition to reviewing the student's first two years in the program, this second review focuses on advising students as they move forward toward exams, the selection of a committee, and the completion of the prospectus.

Third Year

As with the second year, coursework remains lighter in the third year of the program as other components—teaching, exam preparation, and taking qualifying exams—continue. Students are expected to take and pass their qualifying exams in the fall semester of their third year. Students that fail to complete their exams to the satisfaction of their committee may not advance to candidacy or have their candidacy delayed. Based on the judgment of the exam committee (in consultation with the DGS), a student may be required to re-write and resubmit all or portions of the exam in order to advance to candidacy.

Certificate programs

In conjunction with their advisor, a student may elect to complete a certificate in another area of study. Students typically complete certificates as a way of gaining competency in a research area related to their dissertation or as a way to develop an interdisciplinary profile. A range of departments and programs offer certificate programs; students should be familiar with the requirements of each program and its application process before pursuing a certificate. As obtaining a certificate may require extra coursework, students should consult with their advisor in advance. Generally speaking, it is not advisable to pursue more than one certificate.

Candidacy registration

Rackham requires all doctoral students in good standing to advance to candidacy by the end of their third year. Registered candidates must choose candidacy enrollment with a faculty member, which is 8 hours of FTVM 995 (4 hours of 995 in Spring or Summer half-terms, except in the Spring/Summer when the student defends his or her dissertation when a full 8 hours of 995 are required). An override is required with a section being created for the faculty mentor. Contact the Student Services Coordinator with the name of your faculty mentor and the section will be created for you. Candidacy registration entitles students to register for one course per term; students are charged additional tuition for any courses beyond this.

More details about this are available in the Rackham Student Handbook:
[http://www.rackham.umich.edu/current-students/policies/academicpolicies/section5 - 552](http://www.rackham.umich.edu/current-students/policies/academicpolicies/section5-552).

Satisfactory progress

Satisfactory Progress is defined as maintaining an appropriate (as distinct from minimally acceptable) academic record, reaching the various stages of progress in the program at or near the time expected of the majority of students, maintaining professional behavior, and, for students supported by Graduate Student Instructor appointments, giving evidence of satisfactory teaching. Cases of students not maintaining satisfactory progress will be reviewed by the DGS and the Graduate Program Committee for appropriate action. The Department takes satisfactory progress into account in awarding teaching support and dissertation and candidacy fellowships. If a student is deemed not to be making satisfactory progress and cannot correct this within a reasonable amount of time (generally one semester), then the faculty may recommend that the student withdraw from the program. For more information on this process, see the “FTVM Program- specific criteria for satisfactory academic standing at the pre-candidate and candidate levels” section of this Handbook.

Example of trajectory: 5-Year Program of Study

This timeline lists the key benchmarks and offers a sample trajectory of graduate study in Screen Arts and Cultures. Of course, as dissertation projects and areas of interest vary, so do the trajectory and timeline of each student. Extensive archival research or international travel, for instance, may produce a different or extended timeline, particularly after advancement to candidacy. Nonetheless, the schedule regarding reviews, exams, and the prospectus should remain consistent for all students.

Year 1 – Fall, Winter, and Summer

Fall Term

- Enroll in FTVM 601 sequence in addition to taking electives, inside or outside of FTVM.
- Students register for a total of 9-12 credit hours.
- Students are not required to teach.

<p>Winter Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Students should take FTVM 602 in this semester. Students should also take elective seminars (inside or outside of FTVM) as a way of building their specialization. □ Students should be registered for at least 9-12 credit hours. □ Begin defining ideas and drafting preliminary lists for the qualifying exams.
<p>Summer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Read books from a summer reading list developed in consultation with mentor or advisor. □ Add books to this list that are relevant to your draft of preliminary lists for qualifying exams.

Year 2 –Fall Term

Students usually work as a Graduate Student Instructor
Register for at least 6 credits of coursework. With at least some departmental requirements being fulfilled, this semester is an opportunity to take electives inside or outside of FTVM or to fulfill the cognate requirement.
Submit materials for the first-year progress review.

Year 2 –Winter Term

Begin working on initial lists for qualifying exams
Students work as a Graduate Student Instructors.
Register for 6 credits of coursework. As students may have completed their requirements by this point, this semester is an opportunity to take electives inside or outside of FTVM.
Finalize qualifying exams committee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Designate its Chair and □ Finalize the three reading lists in individual meetings with its members
Agree with each member of the exam committee on what advising you need and how regularly you will meet in advance of the exams.

Year 2 –Summer Term

Prepare for qualifying exams.

Year 3 – Fall Term

Students typically work as GSIs this term.
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Take qualifying exams.
Second-year review meeting.
Schedule exam defense meeting. After students defend exams, they advance to candidacy

Year 3 – Winter Term

Students should enroll in FTVM 604.
Students typically work as GSIs this term.
Students continue with any remaining coursework necessary to fulfill requirements.
Finalize the composition of the Dissertation Committee.
Schedule meeting with Dissertation Committee to evaluate the Prospectus.

Year 3 – Spring/Summer

Work on finalizing the Dissertation Prospectus and the Dissertation Committee.
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Year 4 – Fall Term

Register for FTVM 995 (8 credits) as a dissertation candidate.
From year 4 forward, students typically teach each semester or find other sources of funding.

Year 4 – Winter Term

Register for FTVM 995, Dissertation writing (8 credits)
Research/write Dissertation
The Dissertation Committee should be formally finalized no later than the end of fourth year. This paperwork must be filed to ensure your eligibility for Rackham administered fellowships.

Year 4 – Spring/Summer

Continue researching/writing dissertation.
Polish and submit a paper related to your dissertation for publication in a scholarly journal.

Year 5 – Fall Term

Register for FTVM 995 (8 credits)
Research/write Dissertation.
Evaluation meeting with Dissertation Committee.
Strategize with advisor regarding job market and any publication plans.

Year 5 – Winter Term

Register for FTVM 995 (8 credits)
Research and write Dissertation
Defend dissertation

Year 5 – Spring/Summer

Continue researching/writing dissertation.
Defend dissertation
If approved by your Advisor and Dissertation Committee, submit a paper related to your dissertation for publication.

Qualifying Exams

Overview

Qualifying examinations are the pinnacle requirement half-way through the program, and consist of written and oral components that are based on student-selected bibliographies in three areas: theory, historiography, and a subject list based on the student's proposed specialization as a scholar. The student should select three faculty members as the exam committee. Each member will advise the student on one of the three lists, although the committee as a whole will evaluate the entirety of the exams and attend the oral defense. The intention of the exams is to ensure that our PhD students have cultivated a broad and solid expertise in the discipline, while developing their specialization within it. Having passed these exams, the student officially becomes a PhD candidate.

There are two components to this exam: three written responses, and then an oral defense of them 2-3 weeks later. This qualifying examination is designed to produce two results: (1) to produce constructive, evaluative information for the student, and (2) a determination of satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress to degree. The student must complete the exam to the satisfaction of all the examiners in order to pass. Students whose performance on the examination is satisfactory advance to the dissertation stage. After exams, the exam Chair/Committee notifies the Student Services Coordinator that a student has passed their exams. The SSC then submits the necessary paperwork to advance the student to candidacy.

Any options for re-taking qualifying or candidacy exams and the consequences for failure, including dismissal.

If the exam committee determines that the student has not passed the preliminary examination, the committee may, but is not obligated to, offer the student the opportunity to retake the examination. The student remains eligible for enrollment and financial support for one more term and must retake the exam (or its part) no later than by the end of the fall semester in their fourth year. To assist this student with the process of retaking exams, the committee will explain to the student in writing what areas or aspects of the exam were not satisfactory. If the student fails the exam again, however, neither continuance in the FTVM graduate program nor continued funding can be

expected. They may be offered in exceptional cases only, at the discretion of the Department Chair and the graduate faculty, and upon the recommendation of the DGS. If no opportunity to retake the exams is offered, or if the student does not pass the retaken examination, the student will be offered the option of applying to the Rackham Graduate School for a terminal M.A. and be discontinued from the program.

Preparation

Students begin the process of preparation for their qualifying examinations as soon as they enter the Program. This means that, as they progress through their first year, complete coursework, and prepare for their second-year review, the students develop historiography and theory lists while identifying and refining a proposed subject area. Both the books read in the courses along the way, as well as the ones read independently over the summer, can serve as inspirations for compiling early drafts of the three reading lists on which the exams are based. Each reading list typically includes around 30-50 books and articles, the scope and range of which is determined by the student in consultation with each list advisor. It is the responsibility of each list advisor to identify core texts, those that may be read more selectively (or not at all), and subcategories within each list as a way of helping students strategize for exams.

By the end of their second year, the student submits the final reading lists to the committee members. Each list should be prefaced by a rationale of at least 500 words that explains the conception of the list and its relation to either historiography, theory, and subject area, and the student's proposed area of study. Students take the qualifying exams during the fall term of their third year. A student who has not taken the qualifying examinations by the end of the winter term of their third year shall be considered on departmental probation, risks loss of funding, and being dropped from the graduate program. FTVM recognizes that, in exceptional cases, a delay in this timetable may be legitimately caused by a variety of serious and unexpected events or situations. A student who is behind their timeline to degree will be asked to supply frequent information about her or his progress and discuss with their advisors and the DGS about how to get back on schedule.

Exam Format

Students' examinations are designed on the basis of bibliographies designed in consultation with their faculty advisors. Exams include a required written part, in which the student writes three essays on the basis of the questions provided by the committee members. Examination essay questions are agreed upon by the committee members and are often generated in conversation with the lists of questions and suggestions that the student has been submitting to the committee members throughout his or her preparation process in all three fields. The written parts of the examination (the three essays) are take-home exams and should be treated as such. Students are expected to work independently. Students may not circulate their essays for comments or edits. Students should only use material generated for the exams themselves; students may not cut and paste from seminar papers. The student has two days for each essay. The entire exam takes place over the period of three weeks. A new question is issued each week by the Student Services Coordinator (SSC). The student then has 72 hours to write the response before submitting it to the SSC. The essays generally range from 10 to 15 pages in length (double spaced). When the essays are finished, they will be distributed to all three committee members, who have at least 10-14 days to read them, after which the committee and the student meet for the 2-hour oral examination.

It is the student's responsibility to coordinate the scheduling of both the exams and the oral examination with their committee. The exam essays serve as a springboard for the oral examination, but the student can expect to be questioned on all and any of the books the reading lists. At the end of the exam, the student and the committee should spend some time discussing the student's progress toward the dissertation prospectus.

Exam Committee

A committee is composed of three faculty members. One faculty member will be designated as chair of the committee, and will serve as the student's primary advisor during the period of preparation for the examinations. The chair of this committee should be a Film, Television, and Media budgeted faculty member, or can be a FTVM Faculty Associate, pending the approval of the DGS and other committee members. While forming this committee may represent the first step toward forming the prospectus or dissertation committee, the exam committee formally "dissolves" once the exam defense is complete. It is each student's responsibility to select a dissertation committee in advance of the prospectus defense and communicate this clearly with the faculty members in question. In many cases, the exam committee will continue intact through the dissertation stage. However, neither faculty members nor students are formally committed to the composition of the exam committee past the defense. This mechanism allows students to reassess the fit of each faculty member with their dissertation project as it develops (whether in terms of mentorship style or research interest), and vice versa.

Reminders

The composition of the exam committee and the designation of chair should ideally be established no later than the March preceding the exam semester, and ideally earlier. Students are expected to take the initiative in maintaining regular contact with members of their examinations committee as they prepare for their exams. If such contact is not maintained, or if difficulties of any other kind arise, the student and/or their committee members should alert the DGS. Students must also take the initiative in discussing with their committee such things as the student's and the committee's expectations of content, range, and depth, as well as the general format of the oral examination.

Dissertation Prospectus

The prospectus is an official document in the doctoral program. The prospectus, typically 25-30 pages in length, should be tightly worded and argued. This document is a proposal for your dissertation that provides an overview of your topic, establishes your methods, your objects of study, situates this topic in relation to relevant fields of study, provides a tentative structure or chapter breakdown, and proposes a timeline for completion. As a genre, a dissertation prospectus must present a coherent, feasible, and clear narrative description of the project that the student is proposing to work on in their dissertation.

However, it is understood that the finished dissertation may, and often will be, different (sometimes substantially so) from the version proposed in the prospectus. The purpose of the prospectus is, therefore, to help the students to organize and articulate their early ideas and primary and secondary material as they embark on the dissertation writing process. It is expected to be a "work-in-progress," and it serves to offer a preliminary and well-organized framework within which the student will begin not only the private labor of research and writing but the community- and cohort-related public discussion of the

work. As a finished document, the prospectus will be a useful draft for fellowship applications and may serve as a springboard for exploratory conference papers. In that sense, it may also encourage the early dissemination of the student's doctoral project through professional venues.

A dissertation prospectus typically contains the following elements:

- (a) An opening discussion of a relevant and worthwhile research area, issue or problem, interwoven with a critical review of the scholarship to date in the area. The student should place their topic within recent theoretical, historical, or critical developments in relevant fields.
- (b) An outline of research to be consulted, theoretical framework, and proposed methodologies.
- (c) A demonstration, usually via some preliminary analysis, that the proposed study will be able to deliver answers to the research questions.
- (d) A tentative chapter breakdown.
- (e) A detailed bibliography of primary and secondary sources (MLA or another consistent format).
- (f) A timetable for the completion and defense of the dissertation.

Faculty roles in the creation of an acceptable prospectus are usually strong. Students select a dissertation committee by the end of their third winter semester. The student then drafts the prospectus in consultation with its members. Faculty have particular responsibilities for ensuring that the topic is worthwhile, suitable to the candidate's strengths and interests, and is "doable" within the time-frame and the resources available.

Within the frame of achieving candidacy by the end of students' fifth term, and completing the PhD by the end of their fifth year, the prospectus should be approved no later than the end of the winter semester of the third year. The student submits a draft prospectus, which is discussed with the candidate at a meeting involving at least three faculty members. There is a strong presumption that the prospectus committee members will continue to serve as members of the dissertation committee. Faculty roles here are principally to help the student further define and refine the document and its stated outline of research. Once the committee approves the prospectus, the committee chair should send the Student Services Coordinator a message to this effect (listing the committee members) and the student should work with the Student Services Coordinator to complete the final copy of the Dissertation Committee Form, which should be submitted to Rackham. If you do not fulfill this requirement, you will be in jeopardy of losing your funding beginning with the winter term of your fourth year. Those who submit timely and approved prospectuses and who receive ongoing positive academic evaluations from the dissertation chair will be in a good position to apply for fellowship support in their fifth year. As with the candidacy deadline, a student who is unable to meet the prospectus deadline must appeal to the GPC for an extension, and the graduate committee will consider the appeal in consultation with the student's advisor. Granting of such extensions is never guaranteed.

Dissertation Committee

During the preparation of the prospectus, the advisor and student will be discussing the ideal composition of the dissertation committee.

Faculty should consult Rackham's policies for details (<http://www.rackham.umich.edu/currentstudents/policies/academic-policies/section5#553>). The primary Rackham regulations for the constitution of the dissertation committee are:

- (a) The committee must consist of at least four members, three of whom must be regular members of the Graduate Faculty. At least two members must be from the Department of Film, Television, and Media. Students in dual degree programs are normally expected to have two committee members from each unit. Having a committee of more than five members is not advisable.
- (b) The committee must have a cognate member who is a regular Graduate Faculty member in a Rackham doctoral program and who must hold at least a 0.50 appointment in doctoral program/department outside of Screen Arts and Cultures.
- (c) The committee is led by a chair or by two co-chairs. At least one co-chair must be a FTVM faculty member.
- (d) Emeriti professors may serve on committees, but they cannot serve as sole chairs or as cognate members except by special arrangement.

The one faculty member who is designated as Chair of the Dissertation Committee serves as the student's primary advisor during the period of writing the dissertation; this person must be a Film, Television, and Media budgeted faculty member. The remaining members can be either FTVM budgeted faculty or FTVM affiliated faculty, the latter pending the approval of the Director of Graduate Studies and other committee members. Occasionally, when a student has established a working relationship with a scholar who is at the University of Michigan but is not an FTVM affiliated faculty, or someone who is at another institution, that person may join the Dissertation Committee. Again, this person may only be an auxiliary member of the committee; they may not serve as the chair. According to Rackham requirements, if any of the members of a student's committee are from *outside the University of Michigan*, the student must complete a Rackham Special Assignment form providing a short statement (one paragraph) detailing the member's expertise in the dissertation topic and indicating why they would contribute significantly as a member of the dissertation committee.

Rackham's Dissertation Committee Form lists the members. The form is submitted online by the Student Services Coordinator and approved by the Department or Graduate Chair. If there are doubts or queries about the composition of any committee, these will be raised by the Department Chair with the Dissertation Chair, possibly in consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies or Graduate Program Committee. The nomination form needs to be approved by Rackham before the first format check, and Rackham recommends that the form be submitted for approval at least 6 months before the oral defense of the dissertation. Students may revise their doctoral committee at any time during the year by submitting revisions in writing to the Student Services Coordinator no later than two months prior to the student's dissertation defense. Changes to the dissertation committee should be discussed thoroughly with the student's Dissertation Chair.

Dissertation

Students should ideally spend their fourth and fifth years writing the dissertation. Meeting regularly with the dissertation chair, the student will conduct the necessary

research and receive feedback on chapter drafts. Indeed, through the writing of early chapter drafts, the dissertation chair will be the dissertation's main, and potentially only, reader. Students should discuss with that chair when it is most appropriate to ask for another member's feedback. It is generally expected that every dissertation will include an introduction, three to five chapters, a conclusion, proper citations, and an extensive bibliography. The typical length of a dissertation is between 200 to 300 pages, depending on the topic and the kind of research conducted. Quality is not always related directly or inversely to quantity.

Dissertation Defense

During the defense term, the student must be registered under FTVM 995 (eight hours) during the semester they intend to defend. A student should not register until they are ready to defend unless the student's fellowship requires registration at the beginning of the term. If the student is on a fellowship that covers tuition or holds a GSI appointment, the tuition will be covered. Otherwise the student is responsible for tuition, fees, and benefits. A student may not use a TOF (Tuition Only Fellowship) the term that they defend. A late registration fee is not assessed to students who are defending.

The dissertation chair or co-chairs, often in consultation with the other committee members, work with the student to decide when the dissertation is ready to be defended. The student, with the chair's help, sets a defense date at least three weeks after the date the dissertation was submitted to the committee. Individual committees may, of course, specify earlier submission. The examination is usually held in the Film, Television, and Media conference room. If a student would like to schedule a different room for the exam, please let the Student Services Coordinator know, so they can contact the appropriate facility coordinator or Rackham to schedule an alternate space. Inform the SSC of any special needs in terms of the dissertation defense (i.e. speakerphone or video conferencing for off-site committee members) no later than two weeks prior to the defense.

Prior to the defense, the committee reads the evaluations and decides how the defense is to be conducted. The defense is run by the committee chair or co-chairs. One responsibility of the faculty member in charge is to ensure that the discussion focuses on the dissertation and does not degenerate into irrelevant discussions or conversations between members on other matters. Although students may wish to begin the defense with formal presentations of their research, our program prefers a short (10-15 minute) informal introduction. Typically, these introductory comments may be followed by a first round of prepared questions from each committee member, followed by a more open forum or second round of questioning. If time allows, an opportunity for questions from the audience may follow. The candidate and visitors then withdraw; the committee reaches its decision and completes the paperwork. It is a kindness to the candidate not to spend an excessive amount of time on these tasks. Since there are always revisions to be done, in most cases, the real decision to be made comes down to whether those revisions are to be carried out to the satisfaction of the chair or co-chairs, or whether one or more of the committee members needs or wants to be involved.

At least 10 working days prior to the oral defense, the student has to register for a "pre-defense meeting" with a representative from Rackham's OARD. This meeting may be conducted in person or happen remotely. Registration is done online at this link:

<https://secure.rackham.umich.edu/OARD/predef>. The OARD then distributes the thesis evaluation forms electronically to the committee members. The evaluation forms must be submitted to Rackham no later 3 working days before the scheduled defense.

The Rackham Office of Records and Dissertations will provide students with the Final Oral Examination Report and the evaluation forms which students must bring to the defense. The dissertation committee will sign the Final Oral Examination Report and indicate whether or not the student must make any revisions to the dissertation. It is rare for a dissertation to be accepted ‘as is’ during the defense. Sometimes revisions entail formatting or proofreading; sometimes a modest amount of re-writing is requested by the committee. Required changes will be discussed by the dissertation committee prior to making its final announcement, and the Chair conveys the general result of that discussion to the student during the defense, and meets with the student soon afterward to convey more detailed information. If changes are required, the graduate coordinator will hold the file until the changes have been made. The Chair notifies the Department office when all corrections and revisions have been completed. The Dissertation Chair will then sign the Final Oral Examination Report. The graduate coordinator will make a copy of the original Final Oral Examination Report and the evaluation forms for the student's file and delivers the original report to Rackham Office of Records and Dissertation.

Please note that in Film, Television, and Media defenses are public, and its time and place are posted in a case close to the entrance of the Rackham building. Faculty should encourage their advisees to attend at least one of the defenses of FTVM students who are preceding them. Witnessing a defense in advance of your own is a great opportunity to see how they are conducted and what you might anticipate for your own.

Funding opportunities

General Information and Funding Resources

All Film, Television, and Media graduate students are offered five-year funding packages. Under current funding, the first year is supported by a fellowship. It is recommended that students take advantage of this year to take three courses a semester. Years two and three typically involve GSI support, meaning that students may elect to take only two seminars per semester. Years four and five include a combination of teaching and research support, with specific funding sources depending in part on the opportunities sought out by the students and the faculty with whom they are working. Note that we require all students to apply, at various times during their graduate career, for other sources of support as they become eligible. The DGS, SSC, and the Rackham Graduate College regularly apprise students of potential funding opportunities and act as resources in this regard. In addition, faculty advisors are expected to mentor students in the process of identifying appropriate funding sources, and preparing strong funding applications.

This is an overview of funding available to Film, Television, and Media graduate students. The processes for obtaining these funds vary. There is funding for which students apply directly, i.e., fill out an application. Others have no direct application process, including fellowships awarded to students upon admission, funding for which the student must be nominated by the department, and funding awarded at departmental discretion.

Throughout the year, FTVM administrators and the DGS send emails announcing various fellowships and their deadlines. Be sure to read FTVM department email announcements for funding opportunities as they become available. For more information on fellowships and Graduate Student Instructor positions, see the Student Services Coordinator or the DGS.

Rackham

"Some Funding Sources for Graduate Students"

Rackham Graduate School funding can be found on-line at www.rackham.umich.edu. Listings of internal and external fellowships are arranged by category (e.g., "General," "Women," "Minorities," "Disabled," and "Study Abroad").

International Institute

"Guide to Resources in Support of International and Area Studies"

Lists various funding sources for area studies, language studies, study, research and internships abroad, and predissertation research awards. In order to be eligible to apply for Institute funding, graduate students must be registered with the Institute (providing information on course of study and area of research). Usually students must be registered during the term for which they request support. Requests for support should be directed either to the Institute or to the appropriate center or program affiliated with the Institute. It is important for applicants to demonstrate that they are seeking other sources of cost-sharing support from departments, schools, other units of the University, or from outside the University.

Career Planning and Placement (CP&P)

Career Planning and Placement's library has books on fellowships, scholarships, and internships. CP&P is located at 3200 Student Activities Building, 764-7460 or on-line at <http://www.umich.edu/~cpp>

Center for the Education of Women (CEW)

"Fellowships, Scholarships and Loans for Women"

CEW administers their own fellowships. See their website for a complete list of available fellowships.

Division of Research Development and Administration (DRDA) website

DRDA has a website where you can search for fellowship information via SPIN (Sponsored Programs Information Network) which has listings "from more than 1,200 different sponsoring agencies, which together fund over 6,500 separate funding opportunities." You can access SPIN through the DRDA home page at <http://www.drda.umich.edu>.

Institute for the Humanities

The Institute offers a range of support for graduate students, including mini-grants, professional development resources, and a competitive one-year fellowship. You can read more about these opportunities here:

<https://lsa.umich.edu/humanities/students/u-m-graduate-student-fellowships-and-support.html>

Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship

Rackham offers a competitive, three-term fellowship to outstanding PhD candidates whose research is creative, ambitious, or impactful. Candidates for this award are nominated by their respective departments. Applications are due in early January. If you are interested in being considered for this award, consult your Dissertation Chair and the Director of Graduate Studies. More information on the fellowship can be found here: <http://www.rackham.umich.edu/funding/predoctoral-fellowship>

Funding Awarded to Students upon Admission

These are not funds for which students can apply directly.

Rackham Merit Fellowships

The Rackham Merit Fellowship is open to new admitted students in a Rackham graduate degree program who have a record of superior academic achievement and meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Come from an educational, cultural, or geographic background that is underrepresented in graduate study in their discipline in the United States or at the University of Michigan.
- Have demonstrated a sustained commitment to diversity in the academic, professional, or civic realm through their work experience, volunteer engagement, or leadership of student or community organizations.
- Have experienced financial hardship as a result of family economic circumstances
- Are first generation U.S. citizens or are the first generation in their families to graduate from a four-year college.

The award covers full tuition for six terms, stipend, support for one spring and summer term, and GRADCARE insurance for five full years, including teaching during entire second and third year.

Department deadline for nominations: early February or mid-March of the year before the student is admitted

Rackham Non-Traditional Fellowship

The Rackham Graduate School has established the Rackham Non-Traditional program to aid students who return to graduate school after an extended absence. Because an interruption in schooling may place such students at a disadvantage in competing for financial assistance awarded at the time of admission, these awards help non-traditional students fund their return to formal education.

Teaching: Graduate Student Instructor and Grader Positions

Graduate Student Instructors (GSI)/Funding Packages

Funding packages require graduate students to teach as a Graduate Student Instructor over the course of their time in the program. Students may reduce their GSI teaching requirement to four semesters if they have obtained an alternate source of funding, such as a fellowship, for the fifth semester requirement.

Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) Positions

Film, Television, and Media graduate students may be considered for GSI positions in FTVM courses and also in other departments/programs such as English, History, Communication Studies, or American Culture. The contract between the University of Michigan and the Graduate Employees Organization (GEO) specifies that openings for GSI positions must be posted. GEO will also request copies of all job announcements. For information, call GEO at 995-0221.

The assignment of GSI positions within FTVM will be determined by the DGS and SSC, based on the preferences and availability of both faculty and students. If either faculty or students have any strong preferences, please make these known to either the DGS or SSC. We do not change GSI assignments once the semester is underway, except in extremely exceptional cases or emergency circumstances. FTVM makes every effort to accommodate preferences while making sure that each graduate student receives a diverse range of teaching experience in various media, course size, and content.

The Department always gives preference to qualified FTVM graduate students to fill GSI positions. When extra or unfilled exist, administrators and the DGS consult with faculty in the field, and some limited canvassing through the Key Administrators or personnel of other units. Unless there is reason to think it will be very difficult to identify someone to teach a course, additional advertising or posting is not undertaken. Individuals identified through this process will be asked to submit a GSI application, CV, teaching evaluations, and references. The DGS and SSC will review these materials, discuss the candidates in a fairly formal way, and consult with the faculty supervisor for the course.

GSI Training is mandatory for all new GSIs in LSA. New FTVM Graduate Student Instructors must complete the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching orientation before classes begin in addition to attending the Department's training workshops throughout the term of their appointment to satisfactorily complete the GSI training requirement.

Graduate Student Instructors can obtain teaching and classroom supplies, including pens, paper, and so forth from the Department office for teaching use.

Graduate Employees Organization (GEO) is the union that represents all Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs) and Graduate Student Staff Assistants (GSSAs) at the University of Michigan. The second oldest graduate employee union in the country, GEO has won significant gains for graduate students, including health insurance and tuition waivers. Each program/department normally has at least one union steward, who ensures that the concerns and opinions of her/his program/department are represented, informs people about union activities and their rights as employees and promotes member involvement in GEO. We encourage you to attend GEO meetings that are scheduled throughout the year and, at the very least, to keep in touch with the current Departmental steward(s). When you are teaching, remember to log your hours each week to track the amount of work you have performed. Although some weeks usually require less than the full assignment, and others more—usually during grading weeks—your overall average should not exceed your appointment hours. If you have any questions about GEO, please contact the FTVM steward or the GEO office (995-0221), 330 E. Liberty, Suite 3F, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

Grader positions

Hourly grader positions provide grading support for less than one term during high volume, peak times; or for regularly scheduled grading of assignments that are non-subjective or include the mechanical or routine comparison of submitted papers or examinations with answers, responses, or predetermined elements as correct or acceptable. These do not come with a fractional appointment and therefore do not include benefits or a tuition waiver. Graders for our unit, therefore, are not equivalent to GSI's nor do they have direct contact with undergraduate students.

Faculty who are teaching courses that are larger than seminars, but not large enough to merit GSI support (in the range of 35-55 students) can apply to the department for a grader position. FTVM graders are expected to work no more than 60 hours for the entirety of the semester. This policy provides specific protections for our graduate students. Their (and our) first priority always should be completing their dissertations. You should not feel pressured into taking a grader position nor be asked to do heavy or inappropriate labor for pay. We expect our faculty members to understand the following guidelines before applying for grader support:

- Graders are not expected to attend lectures, read the course materials, or hold office hours. Their primary function is to assist faculty with grading *only*. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to train the grader who might have little or no experience in their subject matter.
- Faculty are expected to work closely with graders, for example by doing the following:
 - At the beginning of the semester, provide the grader with the syllabus and schedule of assignments deadlines, including when graders are expected to complete their grading.
 - Creating a grading rubric or providing an answer key for each assignment to help the grader identify specific criteria for which assignments are to be graded.
 - Scheduling a meeting with your grader when an assignment is due to grade several assignments together in order to teach the grader how to best evaluate the assignments.
- Graders can assist faculty with organizational matters at the beginning of the term such as photocopying the syllabus for the first day of class, obtaining and uploading readings to Canvas, and placing films of reserve at the library. However, please be aware that grader appointments in the fall do not begin until September 1 and in the Winter until January 2. Graders cannot be expected to work before these dates.
- Faculty who are eligible for hourly grader support first discuss this with the Department Chair, the Chief Administrator, and possibly the DGS. Once their request is accepted, the faculty member can either post an ad with the SSC that provides the following information: estimated enrollment in the course; the exact number of assignments and their structure (e.g. one 5-7 page paper, two multiple choice exams, etc.) or hire a graduate student (from FTVM or another unit) to hire as a grader.

- Undergraduate students are never eligible for employment as graders from either Film, Television, and Media funds or from faculty research accounts.

Research Assistantships

These positions are awarded at the discretion of individual faculty members, or by the department as special projects come up. Speak to specific faculty, the DGS or the Department Chair if you are interested.

Funds Awarded at Discretion of Department

Two forms of research support are guaranteed to the Department each year by Rackham: Humanities Candidacy Research Fellowships (1 per year) and One-Term Dissertation Fellowships (1 per year). A One-Term Dissertation Fellowship includes stipend for one semester, tuition, and GradCare. A Candidacy Fellowship includes stipend, tuition and GradCare for one academic (fall or winter) semester, plus stipend and GradCare (no tuition) for the flanking Spring-Summer (i.e., a total of 8 months stipend support). Candidacy Fellowships are restricted to students who advanced to candidacy by the end of their third year and are not past the sixth year of their doctoral program. The GPC awards these fellowships based on a student's status and year in the program, and progress to degree.

Department-Nominated Competitive Fellowships

Four internal fellowship opportunities—the Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship, the (CEW) Mary Malcomson Rafael Fellowship, the Sweetland Fellowship, and the Barbour Fellowship—require Department nomination, which is handled by the GPC. For all but the Sweetland Fellowship, eligible students are invited in the fall term to submit an application for consideration by the GPC. Faculty members are copied on the call for applications so they may encourage eligible advisees to apply. Although the GPC will offer feedback on application materials, advisors should guide preparation of the initial application. The SSC works in coordination with the DGS to then submit all necessary materials.

Other Funding Opportunities

Rackham Graduate Student Research Grants

The Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant is designed to support Rackham graduate students who need assistance to carry out research that advances their progress toward their degree. Pre-candidates are eligible for an award up to \$1,500. Candidates are eligible for an award up to \$3,000. FTVM students have had a strong record in obtaining these.

For more details, see: <http://www.rackham.umich.edu/funding/research-grant>

Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships

These fellowships are available to graduate students for study of certain foreign languages and administered by various area studies programs. See International Institute's "Guide to Resources" for more information.

Harold and Vivian Shapiro Awards

Established by former President Harold T. Shapiro and Vivian Shapiro, former faculty member, to assist with interest payments on the unsubsidized educational loans that

students are obligated to pay while still in graduate school. Students enrolled full time in any Rackham degree program may apply. Deadline for application is October. Contact Rackham's Fellowships Office for more details.

Rackham Discretionary Fund

These funds are designed to meet one-time, unusual, or unforeseen expenses not covered by other programs of funding. Not more than one application per student per fiscal year. There is a rolling deadline for these funds. Contact Rackham's Fellowship Office for more details.

Travel Grants

Administered by Rackham, Students may apply for only one travel grant, either domestic or international, not both) during the fiscal year July 1–June 30. Awards of up to \$800 for travel to give a paper at a conference in the U.S, and \$1050 for transcontinental travel, including Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico, and up to \$1,300 for conferences in Africa, Asia, South America and Australia. Check Rackham's website for application deadlines.

Trueblood Funding

Students in need of additional funding for conference travel may submit a request to receive Trueblood funds. A request may only be submitted only after Rackham Travel Grant funds and other potential sources have been exhausted for the academic year. To request this funding, a student must complete the [online form](#) and send it to the Chair, the DGS, and the Student Services Coordinator. The following information is required on this form:

- a. A description of the conference travel
- b. A budget for anticipated expenses
- c. The amount requested from the Film, Television, and Media department (maximum amount of \$500)
- d. Evidence that the student has already attempted to secure funding from existing sources for which they are eligible

Students must apply for these funds in advance of their travel. **A student may only submit a request once per academic year.**

External Funding

The Department notifies graduate students over email as fellowship information becomes available over the course of the year. Depending on their area of study, students may be eligible for a range of external funding opportunities. Students are expected to actively search out these opportunities, with the assistance of their dissertation chair or another faculty member who may be aware of relevant funding options.

Summer Funding

The Department of Film, Television, and Media will provide each graduate student with funding during the summer. Our policy guarantees that each student will receive a minimum of \$6,000 for living expenses over the summer. For pre-candidacy students,

these are distributed from departmental funds. This ideally allows pre-candidates to focus on summer reading and preparing for exams. However, students who have advanced to candidacy are expected to pursue other summer funding and career building opportunities, including summer teaching and fellowships. If the amount of the award or compensation is under \$6000, the department will cover the difference. If a student receives an award, fellowship, or position that pays more than \$6000 dollars over the course of the summer (and many of them do), the student will receive no departmental funds. If a student is awarded a travel grant (i.e. Rackham Travel Grant, Trueblood, Richard Abel Graduate Travel Funds, etc.), department summer funding will not be affected. This policy is designed to maximize our resources and to guarantee that each student has sufficient financial support during summer months.

Work Study

Graduate students should consider applying for work study status. If you have work study status it is less expensive for an employer—for instance, a faculty member with a research grant—to hire you, as part of your salary comes from the Federal Government. To qualify, you have to fill out the appropriate form (FAFSA), which is available online. You will need to have your tax information for the current year in order to apply. Funding runs out quickly, so the sooner you apply, the better.

FTVM Program-specific criteria for satisfactory academic standing

Satisfactory Progress

Satisfactory Progress is defined as maintaining an appropriate (as distinct from minimally acceptable) academic record, reaching the various stages of progress in the program at or near the time expected of the majority of students, maintaining professional behavior, and, for students supported by Graduate Student Instructor appointments, giving evidence of satisfactory teaching. Cases of students not maintaining satisfactory progress will be reviewed by the DGS and the Graduate Program Committee for appropriate action. The Department takes satisfactory progress into account in awarding teaching support and dissertation and candidacy fellowships. If a student is deemed not to be making satisfactory progress and cannot correct this within a reasonable amount of time (generally one semester), then the faculty may recommend that the student withdraw from the program.

To maintain satisfactory academic standing, graduate students must make satisfactory progress toward their degrees and have a minimum Rackham cumulative grade point average (GPA) of "B" as well as a minimum GPA of "B" for all graduate courses taken for credit and applied towards the degree programs. Students who fall below this average are placed on academic probation. Failure to receive an acceptable grade means course credit will not be applied toward requirements for the degree. Students performing only at minimal grade levels will have difficulty in persuading the Graduate Program Committee that their progress has been satisfactory or justifies the continuation of support. In addition to completing required coursework with acceptable grades, satisfactory progress entails the timely adherence to the following benchmarks:

- Successfully completing the first- and second-year review process.
- Passing comprehensive exams by the spring semester of the third year.
- Successfully completing the prospectus defense by the spring semester of the third year.
- Advancing to candidacy by the end of spring semester of the third year.

Professional Behavior

Students are expected to maintain professional behavior. This entails treating fellow members of the university community with respect, courtesy, and integrity. Students are expected to maintain timely and effective communication with faculty, students, and administrators. Further, students are expected to behave in a way that contributes to an inclusive and welcoming climate at the University of Michigan. As a Graduate Student Instructor, one is expected to treat the lead instructor with respect. Good citizenship within FTVM includes participating in Departmental events, such as scholarly talks and professionalization workshops.

Reports of unprofessional behavior will be assessed by the GPC in consultation with the Department Chair and the student's advisor, as deemed appropriate. When it is determined that a student's behavior is unprofessional, steps will be taken to ensure that the student receives clear and specific feedback about the nature of the behavior, the impact it has on others, and the requirements for correcting the behavior.

The program or graduate chair, advisor, mentor, or other appropriate faculty member(s) should meet with the student and:

- Discuss the behavior (using specific examples) and the impact it has on others;
- Explain the expectations of the program for standards of behavior;
- Give the student an opportunity to provide an explanation for the behavior that gives cause for concern;
- Inform the student of University resources that are available to help manage the behavior;
- Inform the student of the consequences for failing to correct the behavior;
- Make a written record of the conversation and send a summary to the student.

Failure to meet such expectations for professional behavior could result in probation or, in extreme or recurring cases, dismissal.

Incomplete Grades

A temporary grade of “Incomplete” can be issued when a student meets three criteria: (1) The student has a grade of C- or better in the course, (2) The student has only a small amount (less than one-third) of the coursework to complete, and (3) The instructor deems that the reason why the student is unable to complete the work that term is acceptable. All Incompletes must be completed (converted to a letter grade) at the time the student is recommended for candidacy, and Incompletes received after this time must be completed at least one term prior to defense.

Satisfactory and timely completion of the program depends on managing time effectively and completing coursework on schedule. The accumulation of incompletes can have significant negative impact on a student’s career (adversely affecting students in fellowship competitions) and has led in certain cases to students having to withdraw from the program. Students should be aware that under the rules of the Rackham School of Graduate Studies, the granting of incompletes is not automatic and, indeed, is discouraged in all but extreme circumstances, and when the unfinished part of the student’s work is small. Any student wishing an “I” grade in a course must officially request permission from the instructor and then set up a schedule for completing the unfinished work. Students are normally expected to make up late work before the end of the subsequent term. “I” grades may be changed to letter grades only if the incomplete work is made up by the end of the fourth full term beyond the term for which the grade of “I” was given; every subsequent term (Fall, Winter, Spring/Summer) is counted regardless of whether or not the student is enrolled. During this time, the grade point average continues to be based on hours of completed work. Incompletes are noted on students' transcripts even after a final grade has been given for the course.

Assessing Progress as Part of First and Second Year Reviews

At the end of each semester and to be used as part of both the first and second year review process, faculty members who have taught the student will be asked to complete a questionnaire evaluating the student’s performance in their classes (see Appendix B). Those faculty members will evaluate the student’s performance and decide whether to “highly recommend,” “recommend,” or “not recommend” continuation in the FTVM graduate program. The DGS will review these evaluations as they are submitted. The completed review forms will be kept by the Student Services Coordinator and will be accessible to the DGS, the Department Chair, and the student’s advisor upon request.

We expect that at least two professors for whom the student has done work over the course of the previous academic year will “highly recommend” the student. If these requirements are not met, the FTVM graduate faculty will discuss the case in a closed department meeting and vote on whether or not to recommend continuation in the graduate program, or to postpone and reconsider the case. The faculty makes the final decision collectively. If the decision is favorable, the department recommends that the student continue work for the Ph.D. If it is not, the student is required to discontinue graduate study in the department. Students must be immediately notified about an unfavorable vote in writing. Students will also be notified if they have received a commend” from a faculty member but allowed to remain in the program. In some instances, the department may choose to postpone a final decision until more information is available. Typically, postponed cases will be reconsidered in semester following the initial review. This grace period provides an opportunity for the student to address major issues and solicit positive faculty recommendations. Above all, we want to encourage students and faculty to take action in these circumstances and address lingering issues as quickly as possible.

A student may appeal an unfavorable decision by the Department in a letter or memo to the Director of Graduate Studies. This written appeal should present evidence of circumstances relevant to the decision that appear to have been overlooked or misrepresented in the student’s questionnaire. A student must normally submit an appeal within two weeks of the faculty vote.

Candidacy Course

FTVM 995 is a course designed to facilitate independent work towards the completion of qualifying exams and the dissertation prospectus. It is graded as “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory” by the sponsoring faculty advisor. Students enrolled in FTVM 995 are required to submit a one-page written statement of their progress to the faculty sponsor at least one week before the end of classes in the term. In order to achieve a grade of “satisfactory” progress, the student must demonstrate concrete advancements over the previous 14 weeks—e.g. explain the specific reading, research, and and/or writing completed during the term, and how this work is moving towards the completion of the larger goal. A student cannot receive a “satisfactory” grade in FTVM 995 without completing all of this work to the satisfaction of the faculty sponsor. Students who receive more than one “unsatisfactory” grade in FTVM 995 may become ineligible for future departmental funding and teaching assignments.

Assessing Graduate Student Instructor and Grader Positions

At the end of each semester, the course instructor will complete a form evaluating the performance of the GSI (see Appendix C) or Grader (see Appendix D). These are primarily intended as a mentorship mechanism that allows students to gain valuable feedback about their teaching. The instructor should send completed forms to the Student Services Coordinator and the Director of Graduate Studies, who will send them along to the student in question and keep these as part of the student’s records. As part of this evaluation, instructors also decide if a student’s performance was “satisfactory” or “unsatisfactory.” While the DGS and Graduate Program Committee may decide to address issues arising with a GSI’s performance, a student receiving two unsatisfactory evaluations will be considered eligible for probation and possible dismissal from the

FTVM graduate program. (Note: instructors do not need to observe discussion sections in cases where they have previously observed a GSI in a discussion section for the same class).

Procedures for Recommending a Student for Dismissal and Options for Appeal

Clearly articulated procedures and careful records of program and department decisions safeguard the rights of both students and faculty in cases where a student is unable or unwilling to meet the academic expectations of the program. Decisions to initiate academic probation or dismissal are made by the Graduate Program Committee in consultation with the Department Chair.

A student will have a period of probation before being recommended for dismissal. In some instances, the probationary period may allow a student to return to satisfactory academic performance, while in others this provides an interval for the student to prepare a transition from the program. Prior to the start of the probationary period, the DGS must notify the student and Rackham OARD in writing of the reasons and conditions of probation; the start and end dates of the probationary period; funding support; conditions, if any, for returning to satisfactory standing. This notice should state that academic probation will be recorded on the transcript and become a permanent part of the student's academic record. The probationary period will be no shorter than two months, during which the student will still receive funding, including summer funding, if applicable. If the probationary period occurs in the fall or winter term, it will ordinarily conclude at the end of that term. For a student placed on probation within two months of the end of the fall term, the probationary period will extend into the winter term. For a student placed on probation within two months of the end of the winter term, the probationary period may include the spring or summer half-terms or the following fall term, for a minimum of two months. A student may be placed on probation starting in the spring or summer half term for a minimum of two months, and does not need to be enrolled during these half terms.

A student who wishes to appeal a decision made by the Graduate Program Committee should consult first with the DGS and/or the Department Chair to discuss the grounds for appeal. A student may appeal on the grounds that (1) procedure was violated; (2) significant new information has not yet been taken into consideration; or (3) the decision is discriminatory or manifestly unfair. An appeal grounded in at least one of these criteria must be submitted in writing to the FTVM Executive Committee within two weeks of the Graduate Program Committee's decision. If the EC determines the appeal provides insufficient grounds, the decision will stand with no further appeal. If the EC determines the decision warrants reconsideration, the EC will confer with the Graduate Program Committee as needed and make a final decision. The Department Chair will communicate to the student the result of the appeal within one month of its submission to the EC.

If a student does not return to a satisfactory academic standing, they may face dismissal from the FTVM graduate program. The following is a summary of issues that arise when considering a dismissal of a graduate student for academic reasons.

- Students who are not making satisfactory academic progress should have an opportunity to return to good academic standing by completing satisfactory work within a deadline that is explained in advance.
- If the student has not been able or willing to return to good standing within the

agreed upon time frame, the faculty should consider dismissal on academic grounds.

- Decisions about academic dismissals should never be the decision of a single faculty member. This process should involve at a minimum the student's advisor, the department Chair, and at least one other faculty member who is involved in policy or admissions in the program. After full review of the case, the GPC may decide to dismiss, or to impose other academic sanctions. To insure fairness and avoid bias, unnecessary grievances or litigation, the program-level process should provide written notification of the decision to the students (and possibly a copy to the advisor), the reasons for it, the effective date, and appeal options available to the student.
- In general, academic dismissals should take effect at the end of the academic semester in which the student is enrolled.

The decision to dismiss a student for academic reasons rests with the faculty in the student's graduate program. However, only Rackham has the authority to make the dismissal official. The staff at the Rackham Graduate School will process the dismissal upon the written recommendation from the faculty leadership in the graduate program involved in the dismissal process.

Appendix A

FTVM PhD Course requirements checklist (prior to dissertation)

Student: _____

Advisor: _____

Core courses Term

601 _____

602 _____

604 _____

Total of 9 credit hours needed

Elective courses Term course title & term (if second course)

603 _____

610 _____

620 _____ _____

621 _____

622 _____ _____

631 _____ _____

632 _____

Total of 15 credit hours needed

Cognate courses course title & term

*taken outside of FTVM

Total of 9 credit hours needed

First Year Review completed _____

Second Year Review completed _____

APPENDIX B
Department of Film, Television, and Media
Annual Review Questionnaire

Faculty name:
Student name:
Course and term:

Note: You are being asked to provide brief feedback on this FTVM graduate student that took a course with you during the past three semesters.

Did this student complete all of the requirements for your course? Yes/No (please circle)

If “no,” please briefly explain the current status of the incomplete:

Based on your experience, would you (please circle):

- a.) highly recommend
- b.) recommend
- c.) not recommend

continuation of this student in our Ph.D. program?

Note: FTVM requires *at least two* “high recommends” (out of nine courses) for advancement to candidacy.

Would you like to comment further on your recommendation?

Thank you for helping us review this graduate student’s progress.

APPENDIX C
Department of Film, Television, and Media
Instructor Review of Graduate Student Instructor

GSI name:

Faculty name:

Course number and semester offered:

Identify strengths and areas for improvement as a section leader:

Identify strengths and areas for improvement with regard to grading and giving feedback:

Indicate whether the TA interacted professionally with students:

Describe the levels of collegiality and professionalism the GSI exhibited in your interactions with them:

Do you rate the overall performance of this GSI as satisfactory or unsatisfactory?

APPENDIX D
Department of Film, Television, and Media
Instructor Review of Grader

Grader name:

Faculty name:

Course number and semester offered:

Identify strengths and areas for improvement with regard to grading and giving feedback on assignments:

Indicate whether the Grader interacted professionally with students:

Describe the levels of collegiality professionalism the Grader exhibited in your interactions with them:

Do you rate the overall performance of this Grader as satisfactory or unsatisfactory?

APPENDIX E

Leave Policy

The Department of FTVM has a shared responsibility to our admitted students and, whenever possible, wishes to keep students registered and making progress toward their degree. If students must suspend their work temporarily for a term or more, they may consider a leave of absence. Discontinuation is only appropriate for students who are suspending their progress indefinitely or have left their Ph.D. program without a plan to return.

There are alternatives to a leave of absence that allow students to remain registered and make progress toward the degree, even if at a slower pace. The University has many resources and services to support students and help them remain registered and connected.

- **Parental Accommodation Policy.** If a student, or their spouse or partner, has given birth or adopted a child under the age of six, the student is eligible for an accommodation period up to a maximum of six weeks. The student remains registered during the accommodation period. The Department will work with students to modify their expectations during this period. A student may take a parental accommodation period without taking a leave of absence.

- **Within-Semester Medical Accommodation policy.** The Department of FTVM will try to make reasonable accommodations for course-related work and other academic deadlines for students who have a brief illness or other health-related difficulties during the term. A student may take a within-semester medical accommodation without taking a leave of absence. The within-term accommodation is a period of modified duties and responsibilities that allows a student to remain registered in the current term. These may include:

- o Reducing research, teaching, and other academic responsibilities
- o Temporarily reducing coursework with the expectation of later date completion
- o Working at a slower pace
- o Delaying milestone deadlines
- o Taking incompletes in the current term with a plan to complete the work in a future

When circumstances arise that necessitate a leave of absence in the middle of a semester or if it is not possible to arrange an accommodation that allows the student to remain registered, students need to withdraw their registration prior to beginning a leave. The Rackham Leave of Absence Coordinator is available to help clarify the implications of a term withdrawal.

- The student will receive a “W” for each course that is not officially dropped after the first three weeks of a full term (or the first two weeks of a half term).
- A term withdrawal can have implications in multiple areas including health insurance coverage; new student loans and loan deferment; registration status and tuition charges; student employment; University Housing contracts; University-administered grants and fellowships.

- International Students: In addition to the aforementioned implications, students with a U-M issued F-1 or J-1 visa must contact a counselor at the International Center to determine how immigration regulations may impact their ability to take a leave of absence.

Funding commitments that were made to students prior to the leave will be held in reserve and made available again to the student when the student returns from the leave. The DGS should discuss the timing of communication with the student in order to secure the appropriate type of funding upon the student's return. The student and the graduate chair should also determine the most appropriate type of leave of absence given the student's individual circumstances. The Rackham Leave of Absence Coordinator is available to help clarify the eligibility criteria for the four types of leave (medical reasons, family necessity/dependent care reasons, military service, and personal reasons).

The Graduate chair and the student need to create the student's tentative re-entry plan, involving the student's faculty advisor, to clarify expectations for the student upon return from a leave of absence. A tentative re-entry plan should include the following:

- The student's progress in the Ph.D. program prior to leave
- The student's expected return date
- The deadline for the student to inform the program of his or her intent to return as well as plans for communication with the department during leave
- Funding arrangements upon return
- Work load expectations upon return
- Plans to complete work from previous terms (if applicable)

• **Costs involved in a leave of absence.** Students who hold an appointment as a GSI, GSRA, or a GSSA will be responsible for tuition assessments for the current term, as the tuition waiver associated with their appointment will be terminated upon their withdrawal. Cost vary considerably, depending on whether students are pre-candidate or candidate, Michigan residents or not, and in these situations, the FTVM Department will work closely with Rackham to try to identify feasible solutions.

A medical leave of absence also involves costs related to continued medical insurance coverage (through COBRA/GradCare Continuance program). If the departmental budget allows, FTVM will cover half the cost of continued medical coverage for *one term* for students who take a leave of absence. Rackham is committed to contribute 50% of a student's one-term medical insurance costs.

For more information on the Rackham policy pertaining to doctoral students' leave of absence, see <https://rackham.umich.edu/navigating-your-degree/leave-of-absence/>